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SUBJECT: GUINEA POST-COUP: AN ANALYSIS AND POLICY
DISCUSSION, PART II

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ELIZABETH RASPOLIC FOR REASON 1.4 B AN
D D

¶1. (S) In assessing Guinea's post-coup environment (septel), Embassy's reporting team has also been looking at the potential longer term implications of our current bilateral foreign policy towards Guinea. Embassy fully supports the condemnation of the December 23 coup and the subsequent suspension of all but humanitarian and election-related assistance. We recognize and support the idea that our policy will not change until Guinea successfully organizes legislative elections. At the same time, there is some concern that we may be backing ourselves into a corner and limiting our ability to influence the principal players. While we are not advocating a shift in our overall policy approach, we do feel it is important to highlight certain concerns and discuss implications. This policy discussion looks both at the immediate, pre-election period as well as the post-election period.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

¶2. (S) It is increasingly clear that both legislative and presidential elections will be delayed into 2010, and possibly even longer. As this period draws out, the USG will continue to push for elections while withholding aid. If the situation were to deteriorate further, we anticipate that the USG would take an even tougher stance. At the same time, given the fragile nature of the Guinean state and the distinct possibility that democracy will ultimately fail to take root, Embassy recommends that we consider engaging more strategically with the GOG while being sensitive to the need to avoid undermining our stated policy.

¶3. (S) Our principal concern is that we are dealing with a military junta that may very well evolve into some kind of permanent government, despite all efforts to the contrary. By limiting our engagement, we increase the likelihood that Guinea will seek out other international partners, such as China, Libya, and Iran. We also lose the opportunity to try to influence key decisions. Although the CNDD seems to be making itself comfortable, there is still an opportunity to encourage its members to move in a different direction. They like the U.S. and they are desperate for guidance.

¶4. (S) Our current engagement with the GoG is limited. While this sends an important public message, it also means that we lack opportunities to articulate and explain our policy position. We have done this repeatedly in the press and with lower level contacts, but information from sources indicates that the GoG is either not getting the message or is not understanding its implications. We have also been labeled "naive" in the sense that we do not truly understand the Guinean reality, and as a result, have instituted an unrealistic policy response that many Guineans do not

support.

15. (S) We are not proposing open engagement with the CNDD. We do not need to meet with Dadis and we can continue our low profile interactions with lower-level CNDD members. However, we do recommend that the Embassy be granted more flexibility so that we can strategically engage at higher levels. The Charge currently does not meet with anyone at the cabinet level. Since Guinea is a protocol conscious country, messages at higher levels carry more weight. The USG's refusal to engage at the principal officer level limits how effective we can be in articulating our message and influencing decisions. This is not to say that the Charge/Ambassador would automatically start meeting routinely with ministers, but rather, that we should be able to target key ministers who we think could play a prominent role. These ministers include Justice, High Crimes and Banditry, Finance, Security, and Information. Four of these ministers are military officers directly linked to the CNDD.

16. (S) During meetings with interlocutors since the coup, Embassy has observed that the CNDD-led government seems desperate for guidance, especially within the security sector. While we certainly get asked for money, it is clear that contacts are also looking for us to explain our policy and suggest ways that the military can extricate itself from the current situation. Some CNDD members are seeking to stay in power, but others are trying to gracefully fade into the background. Outside the government, there is a second tier of advisors that are not necessarily publicly connected to the CNDD, but who have access to key decision makers. These contacts are within the security sector and are interested in

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everything from anti-narcotics efforts to security sector reform. We already engage with these individuals, primarily as sources of information, as many of them are long-time contacts who pre-date the coup. The USG may want to consider ways we can use these contacts as conduits to advance our policy agenda. Embassy recognizes that such engagement would need to be handled carefully, but also sees the potential for success in such interactions. At this point, it might be useful to have a broader discussion of how we could strategically engage with these contacts.

17. (S) It is increasingly likely that we will be dealing with the CNDD for at least another year, if not longer. We need to think about ways we can engage with them more directly, without undermining our overall policy position, so that we can advance our interests.

GETTING TO ELECTIONS

18. (S) Elections do not represent a perfect solution to Guinea's political crisis, but Embassy believes that they represent the best democratic solution. With that said, there appear to be significant hurdles to overcome in order to get them to take place in a free, fair, and transparent manner.

19. (S) Before the coup, the USG maintained that the GoG needed to contribute some funding to elections as a demonstration of political will and vested interest. Embassy continues to advance this argument, but we question whether the goal at this point should be trying to make the GoG contribute, or whether we should be looking to do what it takes to simply make the elections happen. The international community is already footing much of the bill and some of our partners have started looking at how they can help further close the gap (currently \$19 to \$20 million). A number of civil society contacts have questioned how the USG can publicly call for elections but then refuse to provide the necessary financing that would ultimately force the CNDD's hand. If we are calling for elections, we need to consider

putting more money into them in order to negate at least one of the CNDD's delay tactics. Additional funds would be programmed to support such things as the purchase of supplies and equipment, and salaries for poll workers.

MULTILATERALISM

¶10. (S) Policy cohesion among key multilateral partners will be critical to advancing the electoral agenda. A number of our Western partners, particularly France, Germany, and the EU, initially opted to work under the auspices of the ICG-G as an effective mechanism for presenting a united multilateral position. However, support for the ICG-G is waning. ECOWAS and the AU have soft-pedaled the multilateral message, often excluding key ICG-G members from participating in meetings with the junta-led government. Embassy recommends reconsidering the utility of the ICG-G as currently structured, which increasingly seems to be at cross purposes with our stated policy objectives.

¶11. (S) We are beginning to sense a growing frustration among some of our key donor partners, which indicates that individual countries may be more willing to adopt a harsher bilateral policy position towards Guinea. At the same time, ECOWAS and the AU may be going in the opposite direction. The USG needs to capitalize on partners' frustration to foster a stronger, more cohesive multi-lateral approach to the coup, which would hopefully include new announcements of suspension of aid packages. Greater cohesion among the donor countries could help keep ECOWAS and the AU from sliding towards leniency. For our policy to be effective, Dadis needs to understand that the international community is united and unwilling to budge, something that has not been well demonstrated to date. To advance this objective, Embassy plans to reinvigorate our engagement with key partners over the coming months.

¶12. (S) Finally, Embassy is concerned that the IMF and the World Bank may ultimately waver in their approach to Guinea. The GOG may make the decision easy by failing to pay its debt service, but in the meantime, the international financial institutions may be considering a more tolerant engagement with Guinea, including reinstatement of suspended programs. Policy unity within the broader international community will help reinforce the WB/IMF's initial response. It is

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important that these institutions not backslide six months post-coup to provide much needed financial relief. Not only would such actions prop up the GOG, they could also be viewed as legitimizing the junta.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

¶13. (S) In addition to government-to-government engagement, we should not overlook the importance of increasing our influence by directly engaging the Guinean people through our public diplomacy efforts. Currently all public diplomacy programs that are not directly related to promoting democracy and elections have been suspended. While supporting democracy and elections is the number one priority of the public diplomacy program, as it is for the entire Mission, other PD programs should not be ignored, as they enhance our image and increase our influence among the Guinean people. Programs such as the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, promotion of English teaching, and other cultural programs are not assistance to the government of Guinea, but are designed to increase goodwill towards the United States among the Guinean people. At a time when Guineans may perceive the United States as abandoning them or not understanding the situation in Guinea, these programs can have a multiplier effect on democracy-related programs by

showing the United States in a positive light and make an excellent platform for directly engaging the Guinean people about democracy issues. Post recommends considering restoring certain, select public diplomacy programs.

AFTER ELECTIONS

¶14. (S) Although elections are of immediate concern, Embassy is also looking at the challenges of a post-election Guinea. Assuming that the elections are relatively free and fair, the country will have a brand new legislature (hopefully followed shortly by a president) comprised of largely inexperienced, politically underdeveloped members of several major political parties. At the same time, the military will be waiting in the wings to step in at the first sign of trouble. The fledgling government is going to require significant amounts of technical assistance and reinforcement if it is to survive.

¶15. (S) The Mission typically receives between \$2 and \$4 million annually for democracy promotion efforts through USAID. If Guinea is able to successfully organize elections, we should be prepared to capitalize on that success and immediately increase engagement so as to avoid backsliding. Significantly higher funding levels will be needed to achieve this goal.

¶16. (S) Similarly, the military is going to require attention. Through past Mission Strategic Plans, we have highlighted the importance of working to professionalize Guinea's military forces. This goal will become of paramount importance in a post-election environment. We anticipate needing to flood the Embassy's security assistance program with funds in order to support professionalization programs, including Guinean participation in ACOTA. A detailed analysis of the current situation within the military and a recommended post-election response is being submitted separately through the DAO.

THE WAY FORWARD

¶17. (S) The situation in Guinea is complicated and there are no perfect solutions. Embassy fully supports our current policy position. At the same time, we are concerned that we may be witnessing the evolution of a new dictatorial regime. Our current strategy of limited engagement may mean that we are missing an opportunity to influence events and encourage democracy. We have repeatedly stated our policy and made it clear that we will not resume normal bilateral relations until elections are held. However, we have not put forward enough funds to support our position. We also have refrained from engaging with the CNDD, which has limited our ability to facilitate their departure.

¶18. (S) Six months post-coup, it seems like a worthwhile exercise to evaluate where we are at, where Guinea is headed, and how we might influence events. In the immediate term, we should consider a more flexible engagement with the CNDD while at the same time ensuring that we do not undermine our

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underlying policy message. We also need to consider increasing our funding for elections. Finally, it is time to ramp up our engagement with our multilateral partners. Once elections happen, we need to be ready to step in with significant packages of assistance, both for the military and the civilian sectors.

¶19. (S) Guinea is a fragile state at risk of quickly becoming a failed state, a development that could set off a wave of problems in a fragile region. At the same time, it is a country with enormous economic and political potential. USG objectives in Guinea have traditionally focused on

democracy and good governance, economic development, and security. Our current policy position reinforces these objectives, but it may also ultimately cause us to lose ground. Embassy appreciates the opportunity to share this policy discussion and looks forward to continued discussions with the Department.

RASPOLIC